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THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY

AN INAUGURAL LECTURE

DELIVERED ON JUNE 13, 1918

BY THE

REV. A. C. HEADLAM, D.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY

It is a laudable custom that the first act of a new professor should be the commemoration of his predecessor. On this occasion the task is not difficult. There have been few more striking personalities in Oxford during the last fifty years than Henry Scott Holland. A member of Balliol College, he became a Senior Student and Censor of Christ Church; then, like his master, Liddon, a Canon of St. Paul's; and at the end of his life returned to Christ Church as Canon and Professor. As a young man he came under two strong influences; from Green he learnt philosophy, Liddon gave him his religious system. He assimilated both with all the eagerness and enthusiasm of his nature, and harmonized them into a living creed which dominated his whole life. For what he said of Liddon was true of himself, that it was the stability and firmness of his central position which gave strength and elasticity to his oratory. Strongly entrenched, his mind played with lightness, quickness, and vivacity in many directions. The convictions were fixed. No effort need be wasted in proving them. His reasoning powers, his gift of expression, his vivid imagination, were weapons always ready for use.

As Holland described Liddon, so he would have himself described. His religion was based on an

unwavering faith, which the spiritual teaching of his Oxford Hegelianism seemed to justify. From these sprang his theology, the dominating power of Christianity in his life, his corporate ideal of the Church, his socialistic sympathies, his political opinions. If the strength of his religious convictions seemed sometimes to narrow the circle of his religious influence, it widened the range of his human interests. It formed, too, his literary style. He was indifferent to logical proof; he distrusted it. He did not care for scientific method. His continuous purpose was to make his hearers realize a religious experience which seemed so profound as always to evade expression. A natural eloquence, a copious vocabulary, an intense enthusiasm, were devoted not to making others reason as he reasoned, but to making them feel as he felt, and no language seemed ever to be adequate. The reality of religious experience was so tremendous.

This abounding faith created a character which gave him his title to distinction and affection. His interest was greater in religion than in theology, in life than in scholarship, in men than in books, in the world than in the University. His warm affections, his keen, vivid intelligence, his human sympathies, made him loved by a wide circle of friends. He was quick to be attracted by beauty in nature or art; a keen musician. He was generous in his charity, careless of himself, full of sympathy for the poor. He was more at home as a speaker than a preacher; his sympathy, his humour, and his freshness could bring life to a meeting however dull. His loss has been deeply felt by a wide circle

of friends, and Oxford will be slow to forget a personality of so much attractiveness.

On succeeding to his office, I may hope, perhaps, to escape the disadvantage of comparison. For whatever capacity or attainment I may be able to bring to the service of the University, whatever defects I may exhibit, I feel that the differences between us are so great that no one could desire to weigh us one against the other. The cause of learning and religion, the work of the Church and the University, demand an infinite variety of gifts, and with very different temperament, character, thought, and ideals, I would only claim to come before you with no less love and affection for the University of Oxford and the Church of England.

I

The subject on which I would address you to-day is the study of Theology. I wish to discuss first of all certain general conditions which are (as I believe) essential for a healthy Theology, and then the particular problems which face us in Oxford.

Theology, if it is not to be a barren study, must be the interpretation of a deep and simple religious experience, and judged by this standard we have to confess that, to a certain extent at any rate, our academic Theology and the religious teaching of our clergy have been found wanting in the stress of the present crisis. Our Theology has been too much concerned with subordinate questions and too little with the fundamental facts. Our minds became absorbed in the history of the

ministry, or the dislocation of the canon, or the Chalcedonian Christology, and we have forgotten to speak and think of the being and nature of God, of life and death and judgement. The clergy of the Church of England, it has been complained, show an incapacity to talk on religious subjects as if they had themselves a real religious experience. In popular language they have appeared to be 'unconverted'. Their minds have been filled, not with the central facts of religion, but with the things of the circumference. Interest in the details of worship, or current controversy, or ecclesiastical business, have prevented them from being conscious of their failure in deeper things. Yet what avail all the subordinate concerns of religion if the fundamental faith be obscured?

There was another defect which particularly affected popular religion. Religion had become confused with the conception of material progress which was the creed of the Victorian era, the belief that under the influence of education and material civilization sin and suffering and war might be eliminated. In fact we had begun to think that sin had no real existence. Our destiny was to be happy, and the world would speedily become a home of human happiness. Christianity was identified in many minds with the shallow contemporary political thought, and when the break-down came the disillusionment was terrible. People thought that God had failed.

An ancient period of history presents a somewhat close parallel. The wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach depicts for us Jerusalem under the beneficent rule

of the Ptolemies. Under the aegis of a sympathetic government, of commercial prosperity, and an established religion enjoying the good things of the world, it was easy to develop a complacent philosophy of life: that happiness was the reward of righteousness, that the man who lived uprightly and piously, obeyed the law, fulfilled his religious duties, could, since the law and religion regulated society, count on a prosperous career. A well-to-do member of the religious aristocracy of the time might quite well hold such a creed. And then came the terrible days of Antiochus Epiphanes. When the penalty of true religion was death, when the Jewish pacifist, who was willing to submit to any worldly servitude if he might only practise his religion in peace, found that even for him there was no safety, when death or apostasy were the only alternatives, all this complacent philosophy of the scribe was washed away. A true instinct began to realize that the heroism of the patriot and sufferings of the martyrs had earned for man the conviction of immortality. But theology failed. The wild phantasies of Apocalyptic literature could not satisfy men's reason, and it was not until Jesus of Nazareth taught and died for mankind that the true answer to the problem of the Chasîdim was given: 'He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, the same shall find it.'

We have been confronted with the same problems and we are thrown back to the same source for our answer. We have been perplexed by many questions which we had shirked or evaded, and shall find a

solution, as the descendants of the Maccabees found theirs, in the teaching of Christ. It is not the Christian religion which has failed, but the popular version of it, which had been profoundly influenced by the utilitarian and progressive ideas of the times, and the official presentations, which had largely got out of touch with reality. The Christianity of Christ was first taught to those who were the sufferers of the world, and it alone can give any satisfactory Gospel for a suffering world. The key to our knowledge of God, as of human destiny, is the Incarnation and the Atonement of Christ. All true progress for man has been won through suffering, and the cross of Christ shows us that that is not a mistake, an accident, a failure, but a revelation of the intimate nature of the Godhead. The academic theologian must never allow the interest of intellectual problems to make him forget the realities of personal religion, or to centre his thought on any other point but the revelation of God through Christ.

II

A second condition of wise theological study must be the recognition of the full stream of Christian tradition, that throughout the centuries the Christian Church has been taught by the Spirit who will lead us into all truth. That is the great and abiding lesson that the Oxford movement gave to Oxford, to England, and, I think we may add, the Christian world, for it is a movement whose influence is even now being continually felt in very remote quarters. Look at the theology

of the eighteenth century. There is indeed much concealed and unobtrusive piety; there is considerable philosophic acuteness, but how sterile and unattractive much of it is. It is as uninspiring as the churches that it built. Large areas of Christian thought had been forgotten. Great names had vanished from men's horizon. The creative power which fashioned the Christian Church and then founded the modern world had been lost. No doubt in the Oxford movement, as in all restorations of thought, there was much that was uninstructed and disproportionate. The ideal picture which it drew of the Ages of Faith would hardly bear analysis. Much that it thought catholic was temporary and ephemeral. It retained what it had better have allowed to be forgotten. But yet the transformation that it made in the theological outlook was profound. It made us realize the continuity of Christianity. It broke down much modern self-satisfaction. It gave new ideals of worship and corporate life. It pictured a society inspired throughout by Christian ideals. I harmonized once more art and beauty with piety. It revived architecture and music and many ecclesiastical crafts. It made religion interesting.

We may have lost the early enthusiasm, we have corrected mistakes, we have a different point of view for many things, but I do not think the fundamental lesson has been lost. It has rather been enriched and extended. Certainly the Church and the theologian of the present day have a double duty imposed on them. We must be ready to learn from the whole Christian tradition—Patristic, Mediaeval, Reformation, Latitudinarian,

Rationalist, Evangelical—and we must be ready also to learn from all Christian churches. We must correct the idiosyncrasies of Anglicanism by the study of Nonconformity. We must correct the Roman tradition by the Eastern. We must not despise Calvinism or Lutheranism. We must study Episcopalianism in the light of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism and find out the defects of its presentation.

I venture to believe that the final result of our studies will be reassuring, that we shall learn that there is greater agreement than had been thought on the fundamentals of the Christian life. The Christianity of Cyril of Jerusalem's Catechetical lectures, of the Russian Catechism, of the Shorter Catechism of the Scotch Church, differ indeed in presentation, but exhibit a striking resemblance in all that matters to the Confirmation classes of a sober English clergyman.

III

I come now to my third condition—freedom. It is only in an atmosphere of freedom that great intellectual questions can be solved. So far as regards the nation and the University we have a considerable amount of liberty, although perhaps not as much as we think. The restrictions on religious education in our schools, as regulated by Parliament and local authorities, are a discredit to a civilized country, and any acquaintance with English social life will reveal how often a man's career may be injured by holding unpopular religious opinions, and how little either

social or political tolerance is understood. But what I am concerned with now is to put before you the religious freedom which is the heritage of the Catholic Church. By a curious perversion, indeed, the Catholic conception has been developed as the enemy of freedom, but some study will show how erroneous this presentation is.

Let us take first of all the classic definition of Catholicism. We are to hold 'quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est'. I need not, as I am addressing sensible people, waste time in refuting the unintelligent criticism which would dwell on the fact that the maxim, if taken literally, cannot be applied in any case where there is a single adverse opinion. Its meaning is made quite clear by St. Vincent himself. We are to correct the aberrations of a part of Christendom by the whole, of the present by the past: the idiosyncrasies of any individual in tradition by the common voice of Church leaders. What I desire to put before you now is how much of what is often reputed Catholic would not respond to this test. The voice of Christian tradition gives us a Canon of Scripture and a creed: it has handed down a formulated belief in Christ, His divinity and humanity; it gives us the Sacraments which He ordained, the tradition of an ordered ministry and a liturgical service. But when that is accepted, how changeable is tradition, how great the variation between century and century, between country and country.

Let us turn to the decrees of Church Councils. On their authority we accept the one undoubted

Catholic document—the Creed in an uninterpolated form which was finally promulgated at the Council of Chalcedon, and which we call the Creed of Nicaea. The same Council which gave us our Creed forbids us to 'promulgate, or compose, or construct, or have in mind or teach others any other creed'. Except as convenient summaries of what we are teaching, the Apostles' and Athanasian Creeds and the Thirty-nine Articles have no Catholic authority. Nor may we add to the Creed, and this prohibits us also from imposing any particular gloss or explanation.

A careful study of the history of Christian theology will, I think, corroborate our thesis. The reality of the atoning death of Christ has been always the life of Christianity, but the interpretation of that belief has been conditioned by the spiritual needs of each Christian generation. There is no Catholic explanation of the Atonement. There is a rich tradition of Christian devotion associated with the Eucharist, but no dogma was formulated until the Lateran Council of 1215, and that action of the Western Church has had fatal results. There is no Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist.

To turn to the Ministry. Let me ask you to study the latest product of English Historical Theology, the work on the Church and the Ministry edited by the late Dr. Swete, and particularly the brilliant Oxford contributions of Mr. Turner and Mr. Brightman, and I think you will see the extent and limitations of Catholic tradition. There is a Catholic tradition of an orderly ministry, but there is no Catholic theory or doctrine. The conception of the second century was different

to that of the third or fourth. Cyprian differed from Augustine. Any theory of the ministry must be subordinate to the well-being of the Church and the fulfilment of its mission. The ultimate appeal of St. Augustine is to the Law of Christian Charity.

And this rule of Christian liberty is the teaching and tradition of the Church of England. Its Articles are articles of comprehension, not of exclusion. It will impose nothing which cannot be proved by Scripture. Its teaching on the Eucharist allows probably any form of belief except transubstantiation or pure Zwinglianism. It has accepted and given us the traditional ministry as the rule of the Church, but does not endorse any theory about it.

It is the possession of this liberty by our Church which has enabled us to approach the problems which modern thought has presented. The nineteenth century was confronted with the great advance of Natural Science, and in particular the discoveries of geology, of biology and the hypothesis of Evolution. There were those who would have limited our freedom and made the six days of the Mosaic Cosmology and the theory of special creation part of the necessary Christian doctrine. But the Church was bolder. Men were strong enough to face the truth; and we have learnt to understand that the science of the Bible is the science of the times when it was written, that its function is to teach us religion and not a cosmology, and that the spheres of science and religion are distinct and should not overlap. Modern biology has taught us a more magnificent doctrine of creation than any we had

conceived, and is appealed to by idealism as destroying the mechanical conception of the universe.

The next great problem was presented by the literary history of the Old Testament. Again there were fears, hesitations, attempts to limit by authority the freedom of the Church; but again the principles of Catholic liberty prevailed. It could assert confidently that no particular theory of inspiration had ever been held authoritatively, and I suppose that most of us feel that modern views of the Old Testament have strengthened our belief in the providential character of the Old Testament dispensation and in the Christian message.

The problems that confront us now centre round the New Testament, the Gospel narratives, in particular the miracles of the Gospel, and perhaps the definition of the person of Christ. Again there are fears and limitations. But surely all our experience bids us have faith and patience. If we recognize the full liberty that the Catholic tradition gives us, we shall find that these problems, like the older ones, will be solved, and we shall carry educated opinion with us; but if we advance with reason in one hand and anathemas in the other, the world will not listen to our reason.

What are to be the limits of tolerance? There are some who would demand for the Christian Church the same absence of limitation as for the Christian state. I do not feel that such a position is tenable. The Christian Church is the society of those who accept Christ, His person and His teaching, and that must be secured. There are indeed two questions, the limits of legal tolerance and the question of personal sincerity.

As regards the first, it must be settled in each case by the careful decision of a duly constituted court. Heresy is a personal charge and must be decided by a just examination of the personal utterances of the accused. Popular and partisan accusations must be avoided. More important for us here and in the conditions of modern society is the question of personal sincerity. What must the sincere acceptance of the Christian creed mean? I venture to suggest that the test which each person must impose on himself is this: that although there may be this or that point in traditional belief on which he may feel doubt, he must be fully assured in his own mind and conscience that he holds that conception of Christ's person and teaching which is contained in the New Testament, which has been handed down by the Catholic Church, which is enshrined in the Creed, and has been given to us by the Church of England. Let a man be fully assured of this in his own mind and be content. Of course in all minor matters he loyally conforms to the rules of his Church.

One more thing I would say before concluding this part of our subject, to those particularly who, perhaps from a mistaken sense of loyalty, perhaps from a feeling of timidity, would adopt what I may call the rigid view of Catholic tradition, would impose strict rules of inclusion and exclusion, and would demand a close adherence to a rigorous code of teaching, of worship, and of order. If we study the history of the Church of England and the High Church tradition during the last three-quarters of

a century, we shall find how wide the influence and power has been of the body of teaching which we in England owe to the Tractarians, but that on the other hand every attempt to break down the old traditions of worship by the imposition of unaccustomed novelties, to limit freedom by excessive dogmatism, and to tighten unduly the bands of Church order has met with determined opposition, has aroused bitter resentment, and has alienated men from the Church and even from Christianity.

IV

A fourth element in our Theology must be the spirit of reverent criticism. The function of a University in relation to current thought must always have a large element of criticism in it, for it has to expose error as well as to test truth, and every generation inherits much that is erroneous or has become antiquated from the past. I am using the term criticism in a somewhat wider sense than is often customary. It is often confined at present to that particular type of Theology which studies the literary composition and the historical witness of the Bible and the Early Church. That must, of course, always be an important element in Theology, for it concerns us intimately to know the truth as far as is possible in such matters. But criticism really has a far wider task to perform, and Oxford has fully played its part as a theological critic. Newman devoted all his powers of reasoning to exposing the shallow rationalism and latitudinarianism

of the Whigs. *Essays and Reviews* broke down a good deal of unreal orthodoxy, and in particular a doctrine of the Atonement which had ceased to be real even for those who accepted it. In another sphere we remember the vigorous assaults which two great Oxford philosophers, Green and Bradley, delivered on the psychology of Sensation. I do not know whether the Reader in Mental Philosophy and the Reader in Physiology would care to be classed as theologians, but they certainly have afforded abundant material for the study of theology in their criticism on mechanical theories of life and mind.

I am inclined to think that a chief task for Oxford theology at the present time is the criticism of modern methods of literary criticism. A study of much that is written nowadays about the Old and New Testaments must reveal the absence in many of those who claim to be critics of anything approaching a scientific method, a serious incapacity to distinguish between what I may call 'guess-work' and scientific proof. Let me take some illustrations. A few years ago we were all attracted by a brilliant book on the history of German Research on the Life of Christ, published under the title 'Von Reimarus zu Wrede'. We admired, no doubt, the prodigious and serious intellectual effort of which it narrated the history, and marvelled, as we have often done since, at the sustained mental energy and the equally strange mental limitations of a remarkable race. But a second thought that must have arisen in many minds was, how little progress had been the result of this century

and a half of toil, and when we come to examine the cause of this we find that nowhere is there any discrimination between the brilliant hypothesis and the scientific proof. Have you ever attempted to study the German rationalistic theology of fifty years ago and discovered how unconvincing it now seems? The current philosophy, or the political situation, or the theological movement of the time created a certain mental atmosphere. In harmony with this atmosphere the Gospel narrative was reconstructed. To minds with certain presuppositions the distinction between true and false seemed easy, and our theologians did not perceive that often, if I may use the expressive language of my old master Ridding, they were trying to hoist themselves by their own belts. They built their reconstruction on their historical criticism, but the criterion of their criticism was harmony with the reconstruction. A study of the failures of the past ought to make us cautious in accepting the theories, however brilliant, of the present.

We want, then, to learn to distinguish between scientific criticism and guess-work. Let me enumerate three instances of what seems to me really scientific work. The first is the writings of Dr. Driver on the Old Testament. I mention his name particularly because it seems to me that he, more than any other critic of the Old Testament with whose works I am acquainted, realized the difference between what was proof and what was not. He had not the intellectual characteristics which could have made him the originator of a new school of learning, he could never

have discovered what he taught, and the honour of founding modern historical research on the Old Testament will always remain with the great works of Kuenen and Wellhausen, but whether in the domain of textual or documentary criticism he appears to me—I approach the subject as an outsider—as one of the few Old Testament scholars who realize the necessity of objective proof. I would recommend his method, especially his masterly analyses of Hebrew style and of the development of the Hebrew language, to those scholars who seem inclined to impose upon us as a new orthodoxy the latest theories of criticism, and are ready to accept his conclusions without learning his methods. I would further contrast with his sober conclusions the wild and fantastic theories on the writings of the prophets, the early history of Israel, and the text of the Old Testament with which we are so often presented. These seem to start with the assumption that no statement made in an ancient author can be correct and that everything happened in a different manner to what has been handed down to us. I am sure that subsequent investigation will not support these vagaries, and that we shall do well only to accept theories when we find sound objective proof given us of their truth.

A second instance I could give is the work of Sir John Hawkins on the Synoptic problem. He seems to me to be distinguished among other investigators of that subject by having grasped the need of scientific proof. And because he has adopted sound methods his work stands on a different footing to most of what

has been accomplished on the Synoptic problem. Turn for example to Moffat's *Introduction to the New Testament* and study all the various attempts which he has analysed with such industry as to the composition of the supposed Matthaean *Logia*, and then realize that they are all equally unsound because in no case do they represent more than a plausible guess. Or study all the many theories which have been put forward to explain the empty tomb and the resurrection on the third day, or the various attempts that have been made to separate the supposed genuine words of Jesus. You will find that none of these theories are founded on any other basis than that of conjecture, and therefore they are all equally untrustworthy.

A third instance I would take is the proof of the integrity of the Ignatian letters given by Bishop Lightfoot. There again I find a recognition of the necessity of objective proof, in this case a careful analysis of style, and I cannot fail to contrast it with much of the work on the history of the Church that his predecessors gave us. His example has been widely followed, and on the study of the development of the early Church and the criticism of its literature much wiser methods have prevailed during the last thirty years, and I cannot but think that the scholarship of this country has exercised a wholesome influence in discrediting the *a priori* methods which used to be rife. To sum up: I should put before you that the criticism which we most need at present is that which will learn to distinguish between scientific criticism and plausible 'guess-work'.

There is another sphere to which I have already referred, where the religious future of the nation demands wise criticism, and that is in the history and theory of the ministry. Here our weapon must be a double-edged one, because we must learn to criticize the many novel theories which have appeared in the last half-century equally with the too rigid presentment of the traditional Church order.

I would venture to put before you, then, as four conditions for the healthy study of theology: a close touch with religious reality, a willingness to learn from the whole field of Christian tradition, a grasp of the conception of freedom which Catholic Christianity should mean, and a spirit of reverent criticism.

V

And now I would ask you to turn for a few minutes to the more practical problems in the study of theology which Oxford offers at the present time.

Theology in Oxford by tradition and history occupies its rightful place. It is what we now call a Post-graduate Faculty. It ranks with Law and Medicine. From this result certain deductions which have been sometimes lost sight of.

(1) First, its purpose is to give the scientific training necessary for a learned profession. Just as the purpose of the Faculty of Medicine is to train medical men, or of a Faculty of Engineering to train engineers, so the purpose of a Theological Faculty is to train ministers

of religion, and by the historical and national position of our Faculty to train clergy of the Church of England.

(2) Secondly, as a necessary corollary of this, its purpose is to promote and advance the study of Theology by independent thought and work. For no body of men can teach any subject properly unless at the same time they are attempting to advance the study. A Medical Faculty which was content with repeating the traditional medical formulas would very soon be quite out of touch with reality. An engineer who never turned his mind to the solution of new problems would soon begin to fail, because every work he has to accomplish will contain elements of novelty. It is exactly the same with Theology. Every theological professor must be ready to enter on new fields of thought, and every clergyman must be trained to wrestle with new religious problems, because the thoughts of those to whom he is to minister will be continually changing.

(3) Thirdly, while on one side a Theological Faculty must be in close touch with academic learning, so on the other side it must respond to the needs of the religious life of the Church. That is why the great body of teachers in a Theological school should be in holy orders. No one would have any respect for a Medical school in which the great majority of teachers were not qualified medical men. The teachers of an Engineering school must be qualified and experienced practical engineers. So the suggestion that the teachers of theology should not be required to be ordained could

only be made by those ignorant of what a Theological Faculty means.

(4) Fourthly, just as almost any subject taught in a Medical or Engineering or Technical Faculty is a proper subject of study in a Faculty of Science or, according to our Oxford arrangement, in the Faculty of Arts, so almost all subjects taught in a Theological school may be studied in an Arts Faculty—Language, Literature, History, Philosophy, the development of opinion, comparative Theology, all these are Arts subjects. They are studied there from a scientific or educational point of view, they are taught and studied in a Faculty of Theology in relation to life. Theology from one aspect may be looked on as a form of applied Arts.

(5) Fifthly, just as a Medical Faculty has a double relation—on the one side to a University, on the other to the General Medical Council and the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons—and as an Engineering Faculty must be in close touch with the Engineering societies, so the Theological Faculty has its double relation to the University on the one hand and to the religious society on the other. The University must have in its mind the practical demands of the religious society, just as it has to consider the requirements of the General Medical Council, but on the other side its duty is to correct the intellectual inadequacies of the Church and the weakness of popular religion. The University, if it is to do its work properly in all these Faculties, must be in a position of independence. For the Bishops to exercise

any voice in the management of a Faculty of Theology would be as harmful as for the University to be subject to the control of the Board of Education.

I have emphasized these points because it has seemed to me that in the various discussions on the work of the Faculty they have been to a certain extent lost sight of.

Now if we look at the history of the last hundred years, there has been no failure in the Oxford School of Theology in vigorous and creative intellectual life. It is one of the most famous schools of Theology in the world, and its religious influence, direct and indirect, has been perhaps wider and more permanent than that of any other single University, but by a curious anomaly as a University Faculty it is completely unreformed. While since the revival of the University a Medical School has been founded, and the Post-graduate study of law encouraged, nothing directly has been done in Oxford for the Training of the Clergy, and the Divinity degrees are still distinguished by that absence of merit which, as in the case of the Garter, is so dear to the English heart. And this in spite of the fact that, while there are disadvantages as regards the advanced study in Oxford of Medicine or Law, probably no place is better fitted to be a home for training the clergy. I believe that it is now being widely recognized how great a loss to the Church of England this is. Other religious bodies are taking advantage of what Oxford offers; there has been some private enterprise. Five-and-twenty years ago, when I was resident, I remember how constant were the complaints, especially

from the laity of the Church, that the clergy, instead of being trained in Oxford, went to theological colleges, and the same feeling prevails widely in the Church to-day. Strong recommendations for creating in our Universities centres for the training of the clergy will, I understand, be shortly made, insisting on a two years' course for all after they have taken their degree, and personally I believe that it is of paramount importance for the well-being of the Church.

I believe then that our first duty now is to build up in Oxford a school for the training of the clergy, and I should much hope that we might make a beginning at once, on however small a scale, in order that we may be ready for the time after the war when the Church will have to recuperate her strength.

May I suggest certain principles which should, I believe, be exhibited by such a school?

There are two methods of training ministers of religion. There is what I may for convenience call the seminary method. It teaches dogmatically. Its theology and its rules for the devotional life are clear and well defined. Its purpose is to make each man conform to an approved model both in opinions and conduct.

The other method would avoid the danger of dogmatism in teaching. It would aim at enabling the student to construct his own system of thought and life. It would put before him the Christian tradition, but would not be too anxious to make him conform to a particular model. It would encourage him to hear the independent thought of different teachers. I do not hesitate to say that the second must be our

method as alone befitting a University, as the only one which will make the clergy able to deliver their message in a modern world. The seminary method, indeed, has been tried among us—imperfectly it is true—but even so it has succeeded in sending out clergy out of harmony with the religious life of the nation and often alienating men from the Church or even Christianity by their unsympathetic if self-sacrificing efforts.

We must remember too how important in the case of the clergy is a general education. Here we have a point of distinction from the other Faculties we have considered. If the Regius Professor of Medicine will allow me to say so, it is possible to be a good medical man, it is possible to be quite a first-rate engineer, and yet be without a cultivated mind; but a clergyman, however thorough a knowledge of theology he may have, who is below the general standard of culture, and does not know how educated people think, is a danger to the Church. That is why I believe that for most men the best course is a good degree in arts and science, followed by a proper training in theology.

We need, too, more system in our theology. If a student from another country were to come and study at Oxford, I think the gravest deficiency he would discover would not be (as some think) the absence of research (for I believe there is much keen research and thought among us), but the absence of system. If he went to Berlin he would find not only the *seminar* but a series of comprehensive courses in which well-known professors would in a systematic

and orderly manner survey the whole field of their study. We do that in England very imperfectly. There are few of our philosophers who have attempted to construct a system. You have to learn Butler's moral philosophy from a volume of sermons. If you want to learn Green's metaphysic you have to read an introduction to Hume. The greatest work of English theology arose out of the Vestiarian controversy. A theologian collects together his beliefs in a somewhat haphazard way in a commentary on the Thirty-nine Articles—themselves a characteristically imperfect and disorderly compilation—and never even considers his method. I am well aware of the danger of too much system, but I think the complete absence of it with us is a mistake, and I believe that the failure in system and order in our instruction has helped to create that absence of practical thoroughness in our life which becomes so conspicuous in every department when a great effort is demanded from the nation. I would venture to hope that we may organize a more thorough and comprehensive system of teaching.

Then, secondly, there is the Reform of the Theological Degrees. A Regius Professor of Divinity, when appointed, finds himself apparently solely responsible for the administration of degrees in Divinity. He has no statutory obligation to consult any other Professor, whatever may be the subject of the thesis. He administers obscure statutes not adapted to the modern conditions of the University, and he inherits a tradition which has been injurious to the reputations of the University and the Church. It is our first duty to

make these degrees a reality, and in doing so we have to consider their purpose. They should be a certificate of a sound knowledge of Theology. Our model should be the Doctorate of Medicine, which is intended to ensure a thorough and complete training. What we should desire is that an able man who has taken his degree in Arts or Science should, either at the University or elsewhere, devote himself seriously to the study of theology—that he should have an adequate knowledge of theology as a whole, and show a capacity for independent thought and work. For the first degree we require, in addition to a thesis, a comprehensive examination in Divinity such as is the Bachelor of Civil Law examination in its Faculty. For the Doctor's degree we should demand a thesis showing original investigation and thought.

The third question before us is the admission of others than those in orders in the Church of England to Theological Degrees. Let me say at once that whether on national or ecclesiastical or academic grounds I believe that it is incumbent upon us to do this, nor do I believe that there is any danger to be apprehended. For fifteen years I have worked on a Faculty of Theology with members of all the leading Nonconformist bodies and no difference of principle has arisen. The theological difficulties at the present day are as much between Churchman and Churchman as between Churchman and Nonconformist, and the same theological divisions are found in all the different religious bodies. But while the aim we have is clear, the accomplishment is not so easy a task. I believe in the first place it has

been a serious blunder to combine two separate things, the reform of the degree and the opening to Nonconformists. If we first of all ensure that the degree shall be one in Christian theology, we shall do something to disarm what I cannot help thinking was a very reasonable part of the opposition which arose when a change was advocated—the objection to a possibly non-Christian degree. Let us first of all make the degree a worthy one, and then consider the question of extension.

Then there are certain difficulties of organization to be faced. It must be remembered that the confinement of the Faculty of Theology in a University to a single denomination is quite normal. On the Continent the Faculty is almost invariably either Protestant or Catholic, and a mixed Faculty is unknown. In certain Universities there are two Faculties. Such an arrangement is not necessary with us because the distinction in theology between ourselves and the Nonconformist bodies is not so great but that we can work together in the same Faculty. The arrangement that should, I believe, be adopted, is to recognize different 'schools' of theology (if I may use the term) in one Faculty. The Divinity Professors and other teachers of the Church of England should be recognized as the Church of England 'school'. Mansfield College should be recognized in the same way, and its Professors and teachers be given a proper status in the University. They should have an adequate representation on the Faculty Board. So far as regards University matters they will be under the authority of the Board; denominational

matters will be regulated by the school. The closer union will come when the different religious bodies are united—a consummation which many of us devoutly desire, but which will not be hastened by ignoring the differences which at present exist. I do not put forward those suggestions as anything but tentative. What I should press for is, that we should at once undertake the reform of the Divinity Degrees, and should carefully work out the wisest method of opening them to other religious bodies.

There is one more practical matter which I should wish to press upon the University. I should earnestly hope that the present opportunity will be taken for the Reform of the Pass Degree—and, I may add, the raising of the standard required for low degrees in Honours. It is a matter which intimately concerns the well-being of the Church, for it must always be the case that a large number of those ordained must be intellectually of the type of Pass men. I hope I shall not be considered presumptuous if I say I have learnt to look at the matter from outside, and have seen how much the reputation and prestige of the University suffers by the character of its pass degrees, and how harmful in the opinion of many this low standard has been in the country. The failure of England is and has been intellectual. What we should ask is that no one should obtain a degree in the University who has not learnt habits of work, who is not acquainted with modern methods of thought, who has not had his intellectual interest aroused, and obtained a fair measure of competency in the subjects he has studied. Surely

now, when there has been a complete break with the past and all vested interests are gone, is the time for Reform. Let the undergraduate who comes to Oxford after the war recognize that if he wishes for a degree he must work.

Circumstances have compelled me to dwell somewhat longer than I should have desired on matters of organization, of examination, and of degrees. I could wish it had not been necessary. I recognize as much as any one here how secondary in some ways are these matters. They are only the skeleton which needs to be clothed with life. But a time comes when organization is out of date and needs to be adjusted to altered circumstances, and that is, I think, the case with the Theological Faculty in this University. I hope the necessary reforms will be possible, but I hope still more that the spirit of learning and of divine wisdom may live among us, that the traditional interest of Oxford in Theology may be retained, that the keen interest in literary and historical research which we owe to the enthusiasm of Dr. Sanday may be fostered and encouraged, that Oxford may more and more send out a supply of persons duly qualified for the service of God in Church as in State, and that in the years to come we may make our full contribution to the restoration of a lacerated and bleeding world.

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